



Gurkas in Afghanistan

*Story and photos by SSG Robert R. Ramon
211th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Kabul, Afghanistan - Coalition Joint Task Force Phoenix (CJTFP) is comprised mainly of National Guard units from over 20 states, the Oklahoma National Guard's 45th Infantry Brigade Headquarters, and contingents from seven different countries. At the Camp Phoenix Compound, it's not unusual to see soldiers in various uniforms representing countries from around the globe. One type of soldier; however, always seems to garner a second look. With their stoic walk and curved knife at their side, the Gurkhas seem to be in a league of their own.

Originating from Nepal, Gurkhas have served

as part of the British Army for nearly 200 years. Similar to U.S. Special Forces, the Gurkhas are considered to be the best of the best their military has to offer.

CJTFP's primary mission is to train the Afghan National Army (ANA) that will in turn provide a measure of stability to the country and help prevent the re-emergence of terrorism.

In the U.S. Army, the non-commissioned officer (NCO) corps is known as the "backbone" of the Army. With their first-rate reputation and motto "Better to die than be a coward," it's especially fitting that the

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ANA Open House

*Story and photos by SSG Robert R. Ramon
211th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*

Kabul, Afghanistan — The Afghan National Army showcased its skills, facilities and equipment during a recent Open House at the Kabul Military Training Center and the Afghan Pol-e-Charki base in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Attended by members of the media and Ministry of Defense attaches, the one-day open house allowed a first-hand look at a well-trained ANA that will provide a safe, secure and stable environment in which government, economic and civil institutions may develop and become self-sufficient and help to prevent the re-emergence of terrorism. "The security and defense of this

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Students Show their Appreciation



3rd Grade students from Woodbridge Elementary send a message to the soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division.

The Top of King Tut's Wine List

By Rick Weis
The Washington Post

The ancient Egyptians clearly appreciated wine. The walls of various noblemen's tombs were decorated with images of grape growing and winemaking, and clay wine jars have been recovered from temples and tombs — some even bearing the vintner's name.

But for scholars of ancient Egyptian oenology, one question has remained frustratingly unanswered: Was it red, or was it white?

Now Spanish researchers have settled the issue, using highly sophisticated tools of analytic chemistry to determine that the residues at the bottom of an urn buried with King Tutankhamen held (the envelope please): a red.

With funding from a Spanish winery and wine culture foundation, the University of Barcelona team got permission to take jar scrapings and trace amounts of residues from two wine jars in Cairo's Egyptian



Museum, including one retrieved from the tomb of the famed King Tut. The team also got permission to test three ancient jars in the British Museum.

The team first tested for tartaric acid, a substance for which grapes are practically the sole natural source. Using a highly sensitive detection technique (liquid chromatography with mass spectrometry in tandem mode), the researchers found traces of tartaric acid in every jar except for one of the British Museum jars — one that did not have the usual wine jar shape.

Then they used the technique on the King Tut jar residue to do something no one had done in any ancient vessel: look for syringic acid. That is a breakdown product of malvidin, the primary red-brown pigment in red wine that — at least around Egypt — is found in virtually no other liquid or juice.

The test came up positive, revealing the wine's "red grape origin," the team reports in the March 15 issue of the journal *Analytical Chemistry*.



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country will be the responsibility of Afghanistan in the long term,” said Afghan Gen. Abdul Rahim Wardak, Afghanistan’s First Deputy Minister of Defense. “Without security, Afghanistan cannot be rebuilt, peace and stability cannot be restored, and economic policies cannot be administered,” he said. “The ANA will provide that security to Afghanistan.” Attendees were able to see the great strides made by the ANA since its inception in May 2002. “The ANA is the most successful reform of an institution in Afghanistan,” said Wardak. “The ANA has already proven itself both independently and with the coalition in fighting against terrorists.”

The open house began with a tour of the military training center, where the courses including basic training, commissioned and non-commissioned officer training and other advanced classes are conducted. It’s here that men from all the ethnic groups in Afghanistan are molded into well-trained soldiers in pursuit of a common goal—securing and stabilizing Afghanistan and fighting terrorists throughout the country.

The professionalism instilled in the soldiers at the military training center and their ethnic diversity play a big part in the warm reception they receive throughout the country. “The ANA includes soldiers from many ethnic backgrounds, and Afghan people from all groups and religions mutually respect the ANA,” said Wardak. “This ethnic participation highlights the continual commitment of the Afghanistan people and government to rebuild their country and the soldiers are wel-

comed by local people everywhere they go in

Afghanistan.”

Reporters jockeyed for the best position to capture an impressive display of ANA soldiers marching, accompanied by the army’s brass band, at the training center’s parade field. Visitors were then invited to catch a glimpse of a typical ANA soldier’s living conditions by touring one of the newly constructed barracks buildings. From there, the group traveled to the Pol-e-Charki base, home to the ANA Central Corps, minutes away.

During the short drive from the training center to Pol-e-Charki, ANA soldiers were positioned every few meters along the road to provide security. Their professionalism was quite apparent, as Afghan civilians in the area seemed to look upon the soldiers with high regard.

“This professionalism has been demonstrated wherever the ANA has been deployed in Afghanistan including the Loya Jirga security,” Wardak said.

The Constitutional Loya Jirga not only resulted in a ratification of the Afghan Constitution, but it also verified the soaring abilities of the ANA that was tasked to provide security for the large council meeting. “They provided the security so professionally and earned the respect and admiration of everyone who witnessed it,” said Wardak.

Lunch awaited the visitors at Pol-e-Charki. The long tables lined the dining facility as the guests were treated to the day’s lunch menu that included chicken, rice, Afghan bread, and a variety of fruits and vegetables.

After lunch, ANA soldiers displayed some of their equipment and capabilities, including rifles, machine guns, tanks, trucks, etc. ANA tankers

displayed the awesome firepower of their T-62 tanks as they methodically destroyed targets on the training range. Following each thundering boom, direct hits caused targets to smolder as onlookers conveyed their approval with applause. Among the audience was Brig. Gen. Thomas P. Mancino, commander of Coalition Joint Task Force Phoenix. Mancino watched with satisfaction as our allies in the war against terrorism performed flawlessly. “The ANA will be a strategic partner in the war against terrorism as well as that of national security,” said Wardak. “The ANA will help the coalition in the fight against terrorism and gain confidence of Afghans on the bright future of their country,” he said. “This investment in the ANA will give us real returns in terms of saving lives and money for the coalition.”

During recent missions throughout the country, ANA soldiers have more than proven their worth to the citizens of Afghanistan. They’ll have more opportunities for success in the near future. “The ANA will provide security for the elections so people can exercise their rights without fear of the Taliban, al Qaeda, or others against Afghanistan,” said Wardak. “They will also continue to support the coalition in defeating terrorists and insurgent groups.” Any doubts in the minds of the open house attendants were probably put to rest at the end of the day. “I hope they have learned from their experiences with the ANA,” said Wardak. “The ANA enjoys the full respect, trust and confidence of the people.”





World News

US-Pakistan tighten net on Al Qaeda

By Owais Tohid and Faye Bowers
The Christian Science Monitor

WANA, PAKISTAN, AND WASHINGTON

— Six days into the largest Pakistani operation against Al Qaeda remnants inside its borders, it is not clear what - or who - has been netted in the unprecedented campaign. Sunday, Pakistani forces reportedly agreed to a temporary cease-fire, allowing a 22-member tribal council to negotiate a handover of the surrounded fighters.

But Pakistani and US officials have backed off from the claim that Osama bin Laden's No. 2, Ayman al-Zawahiri is the "high-value target" surrounded by the 7,000-strong Pakistani deployment. They say another important jihadist could be holed up in the compound: Qari Tahir Yaldash, a founding member of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) who has allied his organization with Al Qaeda.

Either way, officials and experts say, it is part of the joint US-Pakistani military strategy to remove every potential site Al Qaeda and Taliban remnants use to organize, train, recruit, plan, and control their activities. And if they catch the top leaders in their net, all the better.

"Manhunts are not things that militaries do well," Gen. John Abizaid, US commander over the region, told a Senate committee earlier this month. "What we do well is put pressure on groups and organizations, and we are continuing to put lots of pressure on Al Qaeda and the Taliban in areas along the border that does not allow them to have a sanctuary from which they can plan new attacks against the US."

Pakistan's federally administered tribal areas are a little larger than the state of Texas. The region hosts some of the world's highest mountain ranges, and independent tribal groups who battled against Soviet and US troops in Afghanistan. It's a no man's land.

Like Afghanistan in the 1990s, officials say it has become a haven to Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

In fact, the fighting that continued into Sunday is concentrated in about a 30 square mile area near the city of Wana, around the villages of Shin Warsak, Daza Gundai, Kallu Shah, Ghaw Khawa, and Khari Kot.

It is not clear, however, how many Al Qaeda and Taliban militants have congregated in the area. And it's not known how many of them have "melted" into the local population, or indeed originally came from here. Locals say, for example, that some 10,000 tribesmen from Wana alone participated in the decades-long war in Afghanistan.

Pakistani officials say some 400 to 500 Al Qaeda militants are engaged in the fighting. Local tribal sources say the foreign militants also have been recruiting and training some 2,500 tribesmen, which locals call the Men of Al Qaeda.

"They are professional fighters with tremendous patience," says Lt. Gen. Safdar Hussain, who is in charge of the Pakistani military operation.

Fire from the skies

The Pakistani military launched the operation - helicopter gunships striking the fortress-like mud houses from the air, while thousands of ground forces encircled the five villages - in the areas that are ruled by the four most notorious, local tribal leaders known to sympathize with Al Qaeda: Noorul Islam, Naik Mohammad, Mohammad Sharif, and Maulvi Abbas.

The four belong to the Yar Gul Khel, a subgroup of the ZaliKhel clan of Ahmed Zai Wazir tribe, which fought against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s, and is believed to be leading the resistance to the Pakistani military onslaught.

"Mujahideen are divided in groups and fighting with guerrilla warfare tactics," says tribesman Mohammad Niaz Khan, who fled from the fighting. "They have automatic

weapons, hand grenades, and explosives strapped to their bodies."

Thousands of villagers, like Mr. Khan, are trying to escape - with children, chickens, and goats - in cars, trucks, and donkey carts, as thousands more are trapped in the area. "For us, the sky and earth are both spitting fire," says villager Dilawar Khan, sitting next to his four injured children at a local hospital. "From the sky, helicopters are targeting us, and from the ground mujahideen are firing. We poor tribesmen are sandwiched between Al Qaeda and Pakistani forces."

Moving the militants

That surely is not the intent of the Pakistani mission. But it was initiated to get the militants moving.

Before this operation was launched, US military officials in Afghanistan, as well as Pakistani officials, telegraphed the campaign. That, some experts say, was part of war-time information operations. When the militants fear an attack, it often gets them moving, or perhaps make a call that could be traced. In either case, they could be targeted.

"They were obviously sending a message," says Sam Gardiner, a retired Air Force colonel and a military strategist. "I think they wanted Osama bin Laden to hear the messages in Afghanistan in the 1980s, and is believed to be leading the resistance to the Pakistani military onslaught."

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World News

Pakistan army battles militants

By Hafiz Wazir
Reuters, UK

WANA, Pakistan (Reuters) - Pakistani forces have traded fire with suspected al Qaeda fighters in the mountains near the Afghan border, killing two Chechen militants who tried to break through an army cordon.

Tribal elders appealed for a ceasefire to collect the dead from the battlefield on Sunday after nearly a week of intense fighting in the lawless South Waziristan border region in which scores of people, including at least 13 civilians, have been killed.

The battle, involving 5,000 troops, is the biggest Pakistan has ever waged in its semi-autonomous tribal border lands and is part of a major push to sweep foreign militants from the region and catch al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden.

"Two Chechen militants were shot dead while they were trying to flee," regional security chief Brigadier Mahmood Shah told reporters in the northwestern town of Peshawar, expressing optimism the battle would soon be over.

"No heavy artillery was used today and both sides have made focused firing," he said. "Radio messages we intercepted today suggest that they were running out of ammunition."

In Afghanistan, on the other side of the border, U.S. troops have also stepped up their hunt in what they describe as a "hammer and anvil" operation with Pakistan.

A senior U.S. official said he was pleased with Pakistan's efforts "to run those terrorist rascals out of their territory and into Afghanistan".

"We have believed for a long time that we really need to work along the border," acting Army Secretary Les Brownlee said on a visit to Afghanistan.

"That is where the centre of gravity is, we need to work both sides of it very hard and we need to do it together."

MILITANT LEADER

More than 100 suspected militants have been captured in South Waziristan since Tuesday and the army has thrown up a 60 km (40 mile) cordon to box in rebels still at large.

Pakistani commanders say they suspect a Uzbek or Chechen militant leader is among those surrounded in a series of well-established and well-defended mud-walled compounds.

Intelligence officials said there was a possibility they included Tahir Yuldashev, the leader of the Islamic Movement of

Uzbekistan (IMU), which wants to bring down the government of Islam Karimov and replace it with an Islamic state.

The IMU is listed by the United States as a terrorist organisation and Yuldashev has been sentenced to death in absentia by the Uzbek government for a series of bomb attacks in Tashkent in 1999.

But as the Pakistan army bombards the area, anger is growing among the largely autonomous region's heavily armed tribesmen, who have sheltered foreign Muslim fighters for years and whose support would be invaluable in the hunt for militants.

On Saturday, 13 civilians, including many women and children, died when their vehicles were fired on. Although one official blamed the death on militants, two other officials said they had been shot by helicopter gunships after troops were fired on.

The army urged civilians to get out of the area as the battle unfolded last week. Hundreds left. Now the army says anyone trying to break out of its cordon will be fired at.

"They are targeting innocent people," said one shopkeeper, in the western town of Wana, who gave his name as just Akbar. "Tribal people are angry. Their houses and villages are being attacked. They have no option but to fight back."

A villager arriving in Wana from an outlying area said he had seen bodies strewn across the ground near one village. It was not clear how many dead he had seen or who they were.

A council of about 200 tribal elders called for a ceasefire to collect and bury the dead. The army said it was considering the request.

RECRUITING GROUND?

Villagers on the border complain that for years they were told the foreign fighters who battled the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s were heroes of Islam, but now they were being told they are terrorists to be hunted down.

In a separate attack in North Waziristan, militants fired four rockets at a paramilitary camp causing some damage but no injuries, an official in the area said.

The military says the battle near Wana is just one step in their campaign, and fresh targets will be dealt with soon.

Former prime minister Benazir Bhutto said the offensive had been badly planned and had back-fired.

"Instead of catching high value targets, the population has been alienated leading to a more fertile recruiting ground for the very militants the regime claims it wishes to eliminate," the exiled opposition politician said in a statement.

Last week officials said they thought al Qaeda number two Ayman al-Zawahri, bin Laden's deputy, might be among those surrounded but the army has dismissed those reports as "conjecture".



Uzbekistan (IMU), which wants to bring down the government of Islam Karimov and replace it with an Islamic state.



THE SPORTS

Waiting for these Cinderella stories to begin

By Ron Buck
ESPN.com

First, a moment of silence for the Utah State Aggies.

The Cinderella Watch is still mourning the Selection Sunday snub of the team ranked No. 2 in ESPN.com's final regular season Mid-Major Top 10. How a team with 25 victories and just three defeats — the fewest, by the way, of any team not invited to the Dance — could not be worthy of an at-large bid remains a mystery.

But outside Utah State having to settle for the NIT, the committee actually treated the mid-majors fairly. Of those in need of an at-large bid after early conference stumbles, only the Aggies can complain. UTEP, Southern Illinois, Air Force and BYU were each rewarded for outstanding regular seasons. The ACC, Big East and SEC can cry all they want about being slighted. But come on: Six bids each is enough.

Besides, it's much more fun to root for an 11th-seeded Air Force team that won 12 of 14 conference games; or a UTEP squad that won 24 games instead of losing 24, rather than for an LSU team that lost seven of its last eight games, or Florida State, which really impressed us with those five straight losses to finish the season.

As a champion of mid-major teams from Manhattan to Pacific, the Cinderella Watch applauds the committee on a job well done. Now, on to the business of picking a Cinderella in 2004.

As those who follow the Cinderella Watch know, we've been tracking low- and mid-major teams all season. We've seen our share of Austin Peays and Creightons come and go, as well as watched in awe as East Tennessee State and Western Michigan didn't lose for months on end. But this is when the Watch gets serious, identifying those teams in

the first week that will ruin so many brackets.

While everyone can pencil in a few No. 1s in the Final Four and a couple of other marquee names to join 'em in San Antonio, the real science of Bracketology comes in the first round. Now, we're not suggesting you put your faith in every double-digit seed in the bracket. In fact, stay away from those No. 16 seeds (0-76), and be careful about the No. 15s as well (3-73: winners were Hampton, '01; Coppin State, '97; and Santa Clara, '95).

But don't limit your search to finding Cinderellas only in the always-dangerous 5-12 games. Yes, at least one No. 12 seed has won in 17 of the 19 tournaments since the bracket was expanded to 64 (now 65) teams in 1985. But the 13s and 14s have combined to win 25 games since 1985.

In fact, there have been 106 teams seeded 10th or higher that have won first-round games. Of those, 33 have gone on to win two days later and reach the Sweet 16. In fact, a No. 10 seed has reached the Sweet 16 a total of 11 times ... which is just five less times than those No. 2 seeds they're paired up with most of the time in the second round. (Ironically, Gonzaga is a No. 2 seed in the Phoenix Region this year. Think maybe the school that put away its glass slipper a few years ago just may see its dreams of a Final Four shattered?)

So, what does all this mean for this year? Plenty. And it's the job of the Cinderella Watch to help figure it all out. So, here are five teams seeded 10 through 14 that are capable of producing an upset.

LOUISIANA-LAFAYETTE

Record: 20-8

No. 14 Seed

Why They Can Win: First off, any No. 14 that wins a first-round game usually does so because the No. 3 seed played poorly.

And of those teams seeded third, NC State has been the most inconsistent of late. While the Wolfpack finished second in the ACC, they also lost five of nine games down the stretch and let Maryland come back from 20 points down in the second half of the ACC semifinals. As for the Ragin' Cajuns, the Sun Belt champions have won five straight and 14 of 17 down the stretch. An athletic bunch, Lafayette started to show signs of its potential as the calendar turned to 2004, giving Arizona all it wanted in a 72-69 loss on the Wildcats' court. The Cajuns have five players who average at least nine points. The team hit its stride with seven straight wins once Orien Greene joined sharpshooting Brad Boyd and company. And if the newcomer's name sounds familiar, it should. Greene started his career at Florida, where he was part of two NCAA teams. Green won't be in awe of the Dance, and could calm the other Cajuns — like leading scorer Antoine Landry — who'll be in their first Dance.

Other Possibilities: It's hard to look past Princeton. But scaring marquee teams is one thing, beating them is another. Princeton finally gave Pete Carrill an NCAA win in 1996, beating UCLA, but these Tigers won't give John Thompson his first against Texas. Northern Iowa took out Missouri in its last trip to the Dance, but won't do it again against Georgia Tech, while Central Florida draws a No. 3 seed in Pittsburgh that could have easily been among the No. 1's.

TEXAS-EL PASO Record: 24-7

No. 13 Seed

Why They Can Win: No, the Cinderella Watch doesn't have anything against the ACC. But wasn't Maryland a bubble team just a few weeks back? Now the Terps are a No. 4 seed? Maryland can't get any higher it was Sunday, which means a "letdown" could loom with "UTEP"





on the front of the jerseys instead of "DUKE". The Miners are the definition of a Cinderella story, going from 24 losses a year ago to 24 wins this season and a share of the WAC regular season title. UTEP was, by all accounts, the last team in the field after losing the WAC title game to Nevada (more on the Wolf Pack below). But now that Billy Gillispie's boys are in the field, expect a young group of Terps to have their hands full just getting out of the first round. While Maryland goes after McDonald All-Americans, the Miners are built around a pair of juco All-Americans — juniors Filiberto Rivera (11.2 ppg, 4.7 apg) and Omar Thomas (15.5 ppg). UTEP is aggressive, physical and isn't a low-major that usually gets these 13 seeds. The WAC regular season champs won't back down from the Terps and feel as though they belong in the field after getting the committee's seal of approval.

Other Possibilities: East Tennessee State takes 27 wins into the Dance, while Illinois-Chicago has won 12 straight heading into the NAAs for the second time in three years. But the matchup just doesn't favor the Bucs, who must play a Cincinnati team that lost in the first round to Gonzaga last year. Bob Huggins won't allow his Bearcats to suffer a similar fate, especially after winning the C-USA tournament. The Flames have plenty of experience, led by Cedrick Banks, but drew a Kansas program that has never lost a first-round game. Bill Self won't allow his first year in Lawrence to end with historic failure.

MANHATTAN Record: 24-5

No. 12 Seed

Why They Can Win: This potential upset has more to do about the Cinderella than the opponent. Manhattan gave last year's national champion all it wanted in the first round, as Syracuse escaped with a nine-point win. As the first game on Thursday, look for the Jaspers to finally break through and beat a Florida team that's had a history of first-round scares, not to mention a loss to Creighton two years ago, and may be questioning itself after being drubbed by Kentucky for the second time in a week. The best player on the court will also be wearing green. His name is Luis Flores. He is the two-time MAAC player of the year and has averaged at least 20 points a game in the past three seasons. Bobby Gonzalez may not be long for Manhattan; leading his Jaspers to the second round, if not beyond, would certainly be a nice way to leave a program for greener pastures.

Other Possibilities: Take your pick of any of the other 12 seeds, really. Pacific gets a Providence team that has lost three straight games. But if the Friars play like the Friars who led the Big East in late February, they should take care of the Big West champions. BYU is a team that could have been a seed or two higher had it beaten Utah in the MWC semifinals. But after nine straight wins, BYU fell to its rivals. Utah got an 11 seed, while the Cougars — who beat Oklahoma State on a neutral court back in December — became a very dangerous 12. Murray State, meanwhile, won 28 games out of the OVC. The Racers played Louisville tight for 20 minutes in Freedom Hall, and beat Southern Illinois. Beating Illinois isn't out of the question, but it's the most unlikely upset of the four 12-5 games.

WESTERN MICHIGAN Record: 26-4 No. 11 Seed

Why They Can Win: The kids from Kalamazoo are the third potential Cinderella in a Phoenix Region loaded with games that scream "early upset." The Broncos are the only MAC team in the field of 65

after winning the regular season and tournament titles.

But history says Western Michigan will be playing more than once, as the past three NAAs have seen a MAC team win at least once (Kent State, 2001-02; Central Michigan, 2003). This MAC team grabbed the Watch's attention early and often, beating USC by 18 to open the season and then winning at Arizona State to enter the MAC as the team to not only watch, but try to beat. Behind MAC player of the year Mike Williams (19 ppg, 7 rpg) and Ben Reed, Western Michigan won 11 of its first 12 conference games and separated itself from the likes of Kent State down the stretch to earn its first invitation to the Dance since 1998, when it pulled a first-round upset of Clemson as a No. 11 seed. This year's first-round foe is Vanderbilt, which hasn't been to the NCAA since 1997. The seeds may say otherwise, but this is a "pick'em" on the court.

Other Possibilities: Richmond is always a nice choice, but the Spiders are playing basically in Wisconsin's backyard in Milwaukee. Richmond has won on the road at Kansas, Colorado and Xavier, so a victory isn't out of the question. And the last time coach Jerry Wainwright was in the tournament, he was guiding UNC-Wilmington to a first-round upset of USC two years ago. Air Force is the best story in the Tournament, but will be a shorter story than everyone in the country but those in Chapel Hill would like to see, with UNC's athletic lineup posing all but an impossible chore for the Princeton-style offense of Joe Scott's cadets. Utah won't match up well with Boston College's physical frontcourt, but never underestimate the Utes this time of year (see: last year's upset of Oregon).

DAYTON Record: 24-8

No. 10 Seed

Why They Can Win: After being overshadowed by Saint Joseph's perfection in the regular season and then watching Xavier steal the A-10 tournament show on their own court, the Flyers just may be the last A-10 team standing this week. That's why we're back in the Phoenix Region, where an upset of DePaul isn't out of the question in the first round and a second-round shocker of UConn could happen if Emeka Okafor's back acts up this week. But getting past the Demons means getting physical, which Dayton can do with a experienced front line led by Keith Waleskowski — one of four starters back from a team seeded No. 4 in last year's Dance. The Flyers won their first nine A-10 games and went 19-3 before running into Saint Joe's. Dayton was a few baskets away from beating Xavier for a second time in the A-10 title game and beat Richmond to get there. DePaul is a hot team, but has struggled to score at times. If Dayton can impose its defense on the Demons, it could be dancing into the second round ... at least.

Other Possibilities: The Watch just couldn't pick another WAC team, but there is no reason not to pencil in Nevada over Michigan State. The Wolf Pack beat Kansas earlier this season and played UConn tough on the road in the Preseason NIT. Michigan State hasn't beaten a team in the Top 25 all year, and while Nevada isn't in that class, it certainly should keep things tight with the Spartans. Louisville is no Cinderella, although the Cardinals could wind up in San Antonio as easily as lose in the first round. South Carolina is another nice story under Dave Odom, but as a member of the SEC, it doesn't fit the Cinderella Watch's criteria.





HEADLINERS



Magnificent Obsession

The New York Times reported in February on a Washington, D.C., man whose love of music led him, in the 1960s, to meticulously hand-make and hand-paint facsimile record album covers of his fantasized music, complete with imagined lyric sheets and liner notes (with some "albums" even shrink-wrapped), and, even more incredibly, to hand-make cardboard facsimiles of actual grooved discs to put inside them. "Mingering Mike," whom a reporter and two hobbyists tracked down (but who declined to be identified in print), also made real music, on tapes, using his and friends' voices to simulate instruments. His 38 imagined "albums" were discovered at a flea market after Mike defaulted on storage-locker fees, and the hobbyists who found them said they were so exactly done that a major museum would soon feature them. [New York Times, 2-2-04]

Undignified Deaths

A 41-year-old model airplane hobbyist was killed when his radio-controlled helicopter went haywire and crashed into his neck (Houston, November). A 27-year-old woman was killed when, during calm weather on a suburban street, a 40-foot magnolia tree fell on top of her while she was jogging (Titusville, Fla., December). A 38-year-old man was killed when his pickup truck hit a ditch at 60 mph, with the cause of death later determined to be that the truck's radio had been jarred loose during the crash sequence and hit him on the head (Timberlake, N.C., January). [KTRK-TV (Houston)-AP, 11-3-03] [Fort Myers News-Press-AP, 12-9-03] [Courier-Times (Roxboro, N.C.), 1-7-04]

Finer Points of the Law

An 18-year-old man was transferred to Youth Court, with its more lenient procedures, after he was arrested and charged with stabbing a man to death at a New Year's Eve party in Edmonton, Alberta. He will not be tried as an adult because the victim was stabbed just before midnight, and the alleged killer did not actually turn 18 until Jan. 1. [Edmonton Journal, 1-10-04]

Least Competent Criminal

A 16-year-old boy was arrested in January in Dania Beach, Fla., after a 7-Eleven clerk subdued him mid-robbery. The boy had pointed a .22-caliber rifle at the clerk but then suddenly remembered that he hadn't loaded it. He had shells in his pocket, but they were .40-caliber, too large for the rifle (but that didn't stop the boy from trying to cram them in). The clerk took advantage of the boy's confusion and disarmed him. [Associated Press, 1-22-04]

Kandahar Fire Department Tip of the Week

Fire extinguishers are required in every tent. They must be hung off the ground, one at either exit in plain view. They must be inspected monthly by the using organization to insure the extinguisher is serviceable for use in an emergency. Do not block or obstruct from view.

In case of fire or emergency, contact the KAF fire department hotline at **841-1225**

Submitted by **TSgt Dean Case, Assistant Fire Chief**





— GURKA from pg. 1

Gurkhas' part of CJTFP's mission is to train the NCO corps, or "backbone" of the ANA.

The Gurkhas train junior ANA NCO's to be more proficient in basic military skills, while senior NCO's are taught more advanced skills in the Combat Leadership Course such as how to be a responsible leader, plan platoon attacks, operate weapons ranges and train lower enlisted soldiers.

"They catch on to things quickly and have a great passion to do well," said Cpl. Bal Limbu, a Gurkha ANA trainer. "They're far better than before and will play a big part in the success of the new army," he said.

Another reason ANA soldiers learn from the Gurkhas so quickly is that they speak a common language.

"The ANA soldiers speak Urdu and all the Gurkha speak Urdu as well," said Limbu. "They can relate to us better than any of the other coalition trainers since we don't always need an interpreter between us. We seem to be more like one of them in their eyes," said Limbu.

During a recent ceremony at Camp Phoenix, the Gurkhas were presented with awards and certificates of appreciation for a job well done by Brig. Gen. Thomas P. Mancino, CJTFP and 45th Infantry Brigade Commander. The moment the ceremony ended, American soldiers clamored to have their picture taken with a Gurkha. Onlookers not familiar with Gurkhas were left wondering, "What's so special about these soldiers?"

Rich in legendary tales, rumors flourish about

different aspects of the Gurkhas.

"If they take out their knife, it has to get blood on it," a U.S. soldier was heard saying after the ceremony. "During their selection process they have to run up a hill carrying huge rocks," said another.

It's often difficult to separate fact from fiction without first learning the interesting history of how the Gurkhas eventually became an integral part of the British Army.

British expansionism progressed through India during the late 1700's and early

1800's. Boundary disputes between Britain and Nepal eventually led to tensions between the nations. Named after Gorkha, a small village in what is now western Nepal, the Gurkhas conducted a series of raids into British territory. The raids, coupled with the boundary disputes, eventually led to the British declaring war on Nepal in 1814. Despite being at war with each other, admiration grew between the adversaries. The British were especially impressed with the fighting abilities of the Gurkha soldiers. After two long and bloody years, a peace treaty was signed.

Realizing their great potential, the British included as part of the treaty the opportunity for Gurkhas to volunteer for service with the British Army. They make up what is now known as the Gurkha Brigade. Nepal and Britain have been close allies ever since.

Now based at Church Crookham, Hampshire, soldiers of the Gurkha Brigade are still selected from young men living in the hills of Nepal. Selection is



Brig. Gen. Thomas P. Mancino, Coalition Joint Task Force Phoenix (CJTFP) Commander, presents awards to soldiers of Great Britain's Gurkha Brigade during a ceremony at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan. The Gurkha's are serving as part of CJTFP that is mainly comprised of the Oklahoma National Guard's 45th Infantry Brigade. (Photo by Maj. Eric Bloom)

thought by some to be the toughest in the world. Over 28,000 Nepalese men compete for only about 200 Gurkha positions each year. Part of the selection process includes running up the sides of hills carrying a wicker basket filled with over 70 pounds of rocks.

Each Gurkha still carries the legendary 18 inch long, curved knife known as a kukri. It is thought that long ago if a kukri was drawn from its sheath it would have to "taste blood," even if that meant the owner had to cut himself with it. Today most Gurkhas will admit it's mostly used for cooking.

The Gurkhas have fought for the British throughout the world and earned 13 Victoria Crosses. Although their numbers

were over 100,000 at their peak during World War II, they presently number about 3,500.

Recently, Gurkhas have served during peace-keeping missions in Kosovo, East Timor and Bosnia as well as in support of British operations in Sierra Leone.

Today, the Gurkha patch displaying the emblem of the kukri can be seen on the shoulders of Gurkhas throughout CJTFP in Afghanistan. With the knowledge and skills gained through the mentorship of the Gurkhas, ANANCO's will be well prepared to maintain an Army capable of stabilizing Afghanistan and preventing the re-emergence of terrorism.





Bush defends Iraq invasion, war on terror-

President mocks Kerry's claim of foreign leaders' support

ORLANDO, Florida (CNN) — President Bush opened his campaign in Florida on Saturday restating his defense of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and the war on terror, saying he would “defend the security of America, whatever it takes.”

Bush was interrupted frequently during his 40-minute talk with applause and shouts of “Four more years” and “U-S-A”.

The impact of the U.S. effort goes beyond its borders, he said to the more than 10,000 cheering supporters gathered at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando. “The world is counting on us to lead the cause of freedom and peace.”

But polls in a number of countries — including some of America’s staunchest allies — have found little support for the doctrine of pre-emption that Bush used to justify the invasion of Iraq.

Bush restated his support for that doctrine, which led to the ouster of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

“September 11th, 2001, taught a lesson I’ll never forget,” he said. “America must confront threats before they fully materialize.”

He also took shots at his likely Democratic opponent, Sen. John Kerry, whom he mocked for his claim that his bid for the U.S. presidency had the support of foreign leaders.

“The other day, here in Florida, he claimed some important endorsements,” Bush said about the senator from Massachusetts.

“He won’t tell us the name of the foreign admirers. That’s OK. Either way, I’m not too worried, because I’m going to keep my campaign right here in America.”

Kerry has refused to identify them, saying the leaders don’t want to put their relationships with the Bush administration in jeopardy.

The president also attacked his Democratic contender’s stance on Iraq.

“My opponent admits Saddam Hussein was a threat, he just didn’t support my decision to remove Saddam from power. Maybe he was hoping Saddam would lose the next Iraqi election.”

Kerry voted in October 2002 for a resolution authorizing the war in Iraq, but a year later he voted against a plan to appropriate \$87 billion to fund operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The senator said he opposed the appropriations bill because Republicans refused to pay for it by rolling back tax cuts for high-income taxpayers, as he and other Democrats had proposed.

Bush saved his most powerful ammunition for the war on terror, one of the main focuses of his administration’s foreign policy since the attacks of September 11, 2001.

He cited the U.S.-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, saying that terrorism suspects who are still at large “will know there is no cave or hole deep enough to hide from American justice.”

Bush said voters face a stark choice when comparing the candidates’ views on national security, implying that Kerry, a decorated Vietnam war veteran, would be soft on terrorism if elected.

“My opponent says he approves of bold action in the world, but only if other countries don’t object. I’m all for united action, and

so are our 34 coalition partners in Iraq right now. Yet America must never outsource America’s national security decisions to the leaders of other countries.”

He added, “I’ll defend the security of America, whatever it takes.”

In another jab at Kerry, Bush said “the other side” had offered little in the way of strategies to win the war or improve the economy.

“So far, all we hear from that side is bitterness, partisan anger. Anger is not an agenda for the future of America.”

Bush also pointed to his extensive tax cuts as a reason for Americans to vote for him in November: “It’s a choice between keeping the tax relief that’s moving this economy forward or putting the burden of higher taxes back on the American people.

“It’s a choice between an America that leads the world with strength and confidence or an America that is uncertain in the face of danger.”

Bush credited his economic policies with boosting economic growth in the last half of last year to “the fastest in nearly 20 years.”

He acknowledged the existence of “some economic pessimists who refuse to accept good news about our economy,” but said he disagreed with them, adding, “I’m optimistic.”

The Bureau of Labor Statistics has said that 3 million jobs have been lost since Bush took office in 2001.

Kerry, Bush said, voted against tax cuts and “voted over 350 times for higher taxes on the American people.” That comment elicited a chorus of boos from the crowd.

“He’s going to tax all of you,” Bush said, adding, “Fortunately, you’re not going to give him that chance.”

According to Bush-Cheney campaign spokesman Reed Dickens, 2,000 people at the event signed up to volunteer for the campaign in Florida. Also, 600 Floridians joined the Republican Party at the rally, 200 of them switching from another party.

Democrats dispute

Kerry was in Idaho, taking a five-day break from campaigning. His campaign spokesman issued a statement calling the Bush speech misleading.

“John Kerry has fought for middle-class tax relief and has proposed new middle-class tax cuts in this campaign,” said David Wade.

“The president is on thin ice talking taxes when his economic meltdown and record deficits have forced so many states to raise the middle-class tax burden.

“George Bush should avoid the slippery slope of debating John Kerry on tax fairness, because with his administration’s abysmal record, we’ll beat him to the bottom of the mountain every time.”

And in a statement posted on Kerry’s Web site, Democratic Sen. Bob Graham of Florida blamed Bush’s leadership for worsening the state’s finances.

“I wish the president would spend some more time in Central Florida and speak to people other than his most loyal supporters, because he needs to hear that his misguided policies are hurting people,” Graham’s statement said. “In greater Orlando alone, the unemployment rate has shot from 2.5 percent in December 2000 to 4.4 percent in January 2004. That’s a loss of more than 40,000 jobs.

“President Bush’s economic policies have failed Florida,” said Rep. Kendrick Meek of Florida, Kerry’s state campaign chairman. “His corporate buddies have shipped 70,000 Floridian manufacturing jobs overseas, and now it’s time for Mr. Bush to get the pink slip.”





Nepal Says Troops Kill Hundreds of Rebels

By Gopal Sharma
Reuters

KATHMANDU (Reuters) - Nepali troops killed 500 Maoist rebels in a 12-hour battle on Sunday, the army said, in what would be the bloodiest single clash since the revolt against the country's constitutional monarchy began in 1996.

Three groups of rebels stormed a state bank, a jail and government buildings in a coordinated attack on Beni, a district capital in the west of the Hindu kingdom and a rebel stronghold.

Reinforcements, including night-flying helicopters were rushed to the remote area, but poor communications meant details were still very sketchy, the army said, adding 18 soldiers and police had also been killed.

Another Maoist force attacked an airport at a small town south of Kathmandu popular with tourists visiting a local wildlife sanctuary, but there were no reports of deaths or major damage there.

"We believe more than 500 rebels might have died in the (Beni) battle," army spokesman Colonel Deepak Kumar Gurung told reporters in Kathmandu. "It is based on what our soldiers saw — they saw the Maoists falling and being dragged off by other Maoists."

If true, it would be the bloodiest battle since more than 200 rebels,

soldiers and police died almost two years ago when guerrillas overran security posts in one area of western Nepal.

There was no immediate rebel comment on the Beni battle, which raged from midnight into Sunday afternoon, and no independent confirmation of the toll. Both sides routinely overstate enemy casualties and understate their own.

The Maoists, fighting to replace the monarchy with a one-party communist state, often target banks for cash to buy smuggled weapons, as well as jails to free captured comrades.








Outgunned by the army, they rely on sheer numbers and human shields from dragooned local villagers to overrun security posts, human rights groups say. The rebels deny using civilians as human shields or forced stretcher-bearers to carry their dead.

More than 9,000 people, mainly rebels, have been killed in the brutal and bloody revolt. Human rights groups accuse both sides of major abuses, including murder and torture.

Several attempts at peace talks have failed over core issues such as the ultimate fate of the monarchy, now in the hands of unpopular King Gyanendra after popular former king Birendra and several members of the royal family were massacred in 2001.

Gyanendra also faces sustained and destabilizing protests from mainstream political parties after sacking the elected prime minister in 2002 and delaying national elections due the same year, saying the rebellion meant it was too dangerous for polls.

KANDAHAR WEEKLY FORECAST

	Mon Mar 22	Tues Mar 23	Wed Mar 24	Thu Mar 25	Fri Mar 26	Sat Mar 27	Sun Mar 28
							
	DUST	DUST					
	Partly Sunny Windy & Dusty	Partly Cloudy Windy & Dusty	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Cloudy
HIGH	84	81	78	82	84	87	90
LOW	58	57	54	57	60	62	63
SUNRISE	0139	0138	0137	0135	0134	0133	0132
SUNSET	1349	1349	1350	1351	1351	1352	1353

KANDAHAR COMBAT WEATHER TEAM





Al Qaeda - From Page 4

carts, as thousands more are trapped in the area. "For us, the sky and earth are both spitting fire," says villager Dilawar Khan, sitting next to his four injured children at a local hospital. "From the sky, helicopters are targeting us, and from the ground mujahideen are firing. We poor tribesmen are sandwiched between Al Qaeda and Pakistani forces."

Moving the militants

That surely is not the intent of the Pakistani mission. But it was initiated to get the militants moving.

Before this operation was launched, US military officials in Afghanistan, as well as Pakistani officials, telegraphed the campaign. That, some experts say, was part of wartime information operations. When the militants fear an attack, it often gets them moving, or perhaps make a call that could be traced. In either case, they could be targeted.

"They were obviously sending a message," says Sam Gardiner, a retired Air Force colonel and a military strategist. "I think they wanted Osama bin Laden to hear the message and move.... The recent announcement that Mr. Zawahiri was encircled could have had a similar objective. It may have had the purpose of just getting him to use a cellphone."

US forces aren't officially operating inside Pakistan, although US government and Pakistani officials say that about two dozen US intelligence and communications experts are aiding them.

But Pakistani officials are playing down the claim Mr. bin Laden's No. 2 may be encircled, although they continue to say the level of resistance offered by militants suggests there could be a "high value target" in the area. "Whenever there is senior militant leader spending a night somewhere, then his armed men guard several houses in the surroundings," says a government official. "On the day that is what happened and they fired on paramilitaries from everywhere. We thought there could be a senior leader hiding there."

Another great escape?

Tribal sources, however, say Zawahiri could have escaped. Last Tuesday, a convoy of two bullet-proof, twin-cabin pick-up trucks broke through a security cordon. These tribal elders say that could have been Zawahiri or the IMU's current leader, Mr. Yaldash.

"He seems to have been injured and appears to be holed up somewhere in that area, but the other two drivers of the vehicles were killed," says a tribal source.

The tribesman says both men are known to visit the area. "Zawahiri was seen in the area in the recent past and visited Waziristan in disguise every four to six weeks," says a tribal elder on the condition of anonymity. Sometimes he would visit on horseback. [And] Tahir Yaldash is very popular among mujahideen for his leadership qualities, fiery speeches."

Yaldash became the head of the IMU after the founder of the movement, Juma Namangani was killed in the US bombing campaign on Afghanistan in November 2001. Yaldash reportedly has since worked with Al Qaeda and the Taliban leadership, carrying out raids on US allied forces in Afghanistan.

Like many of the foreign fighters, Yaldash fought the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s, and stayed in the region. There are reportedly some 200 Uzbek fighters hiding in South Waziristan.

"We have intercepted messages in Arabic, Chechen, and Uzbek languages," says General Hussain. "We have arrested a Chechen and recovered huge arms and ammunition. We believe that some of them were providing training to locals for suicide bombings."

Hussain wouldn't say what has been learned so far from those captured - reportedly about 100. But he says, "We have received valuable information from the arrested militants."

The negotiations to end the fighting and turn over the Al Qaeda fighters is scheduled to begin Monday. Tribal elders are trying to help. "It is up to Zalikhel tribe now to act quickly to save Waziristan turning into Afghanistan and to save the region and tribesmen from destruction," says Azam Khan, a top government official in South Waziristan. Saliab Meshud, a sociologist and writer in South Waziristan, worries though, that the fighting could spread and that there will be more bloodshed - especially if it moves into the mountains. "It seems Pakistani security forces are committed to eliminate Al Qaeda guerrillas at any cost," he says. "And mujahideen will fight till their last as they will not surrender."

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